

U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the *Isenmann* patent, U.S. Patent No. 3,979,934 ("*Isenmann*"), and claims 1-4, 6, and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the *Krock* patent, U.S. Patent No. 3,600,917 ("*Krock*").

The Examiner also rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Krock* in view of either the *Feng* patent, U.S. Patent No. 4,679,282 ("*Feng*"), or the *Krauss* patent, U.S. Patent No. 55,590,444 ("*Krauss*"). The Examiner also rejected claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Isenmann* in view of the *Uehara* patent, FR Patent No. 2783679 ("*Uehara*").

In addition to the above, the Examiner objected to claim 11 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. (Applicants believe that Examiner inadvertently identified claim 9 instead of claim 11 in the Office Action.) The Examiner indicated and Applicants acknowledge that claim 11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

I. Rejection of claims 1 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. In particular, the Examiner objected to claim 1, lines 6-7, as lacking antecedent basis for "the center" and "the plane." Applicants have amended claim 1 to more clearly recite the subject matter of the invention and address the Examiner's objections.

With regards to claim 11, the Examiner objected to the second occurrence of "or a top surface" in line 5. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 11 has been amended

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to more clearly recite the subject matter of the invention and to address the Examiner's objection.

The scope of these claims have not been narrowed nor has new matter been added by these amendments. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are sufficiently definite and request the withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, objections.

II. Rejection of claims 1-4, 6, 7, and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), claims 1-4, 6, and 8 as being anticipated by *Isenmann* and claims 1-4, 6, and 7 as being anticipated by *Krock*.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 1 has been amended in order to more clearly recite the subject matter of the invention. In particular, the features of canceled claims 2 and 5 have been incorporated to claim 1. Claim 1, as amended, recites, for example, a buckle comprising:

a female body formed with a flat housing and a male body having flexible insertion legs which are engaged with each other by insertion, and having butting portions including straight portions and a concave portion or a convex portion, which are formed on at least a front surface of the front surface, a rear surface, and side faces of the female body and the male body when the female body engages with the male body, wherein the concave portion or the convex portion is formed at a center of the butting portions sandwiched by the straight portions, the convex portion in the butting portions protrudes in a trapezoidal form in which a front end is slightly narrowed, while the concave portion is concavely dented with the inlet expanded, and the female body and the male body are thereby formed closely in contact at the butting portions.

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Applicants respectfully submit that neither *Isenmann* nor *Krock* disclose the features set forth in amended claim 1. In particular, neither *Isenmann* nor *Krock* disclose, at least, "butting portions including straight portions and a concave portion or a convex portion, which are formed on at least a front surface of the front surface, a rear surface, and side faces of the female body and the male body when the female body engages with the male body." Thus, independent claim 1 patentably distinguishes the present invention over *Isenmann* and *Krock*.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Dependent claims 2 and 6 have been canceled; therefore, the pending dependent claims that are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) are claims 3-4, 7, and 8. Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 3-4, 7, and 8 are also allowable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 1 and by virtue of their dependency upon independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 3-4, 7, and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

III. Rejection of Claims 5, 9, and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Krock* in view of either *Feng* or *Krauss*. Claim 5 has been canceled, so the Applicants respectfully submit that no response is required.

The Examiner rejected claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Isenmann* in view of *Uehara*. As discussed above, claims 7 and 8 are allowable, and claims 9 and 10 are respectively dependent upon allowable claims 7

and 8. Accordingly, dependent claims 9 and 10 are also allowable for at least the reason set forth above regarding claims 7 and 8 and by virtue of their dependency upon claims 7 and 8. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims, namely, claims 1, 3-4, and 7-11.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX TO AMENDMENT OF AUGUST 23, 2002

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Amendments To The Claims

1. (Amended) A buckle comprising:

a female body formed with a flat housing and a male body having flexible insertion legs which are engaged with each other by insertion, and

[wherein] having butting portions including straight portions and a concave portion or a convex portion [is] , which are [provided at the center of butting portions on the plane] formed on at least a front surface of the front surface, a rear surface, and side faces of the female body and the male body when the female body engages with the male body, [and the female body and the male body are thereby formed closely in contact]

wherein the concave portion or the convex portion is formed at a center of the butting portions sandwiched by the straight portions,

the convex portion in the butting portions protrudes in a trapezoidal form in which a front end is slightly narrowed, while the concave portion is concavely dented with the inlet expanded, and

the female body and the male body are thereby formed closely in contact at the butting portions.

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3. (Amended) The buckle according to claim 1, wherein butting portions comprising the straight portions and the concave portion or the convex portion are formed on both front and rear surfaces of the female body and the male body.

11. (Amended) The buckle according to claim 8, characterized in that the concave portion disposed at the center of the male body is formed concavely up to the belt through hole, while the convex portion of the upper plate of the female body is extended to a top surface of the belt through hole or a top surface [or the top surface] of a hooking [member] rod.